



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

THORNDALE,*

OR THE CONFLICT OF OPINIONS.

If, during the present feverish and impatient age, most of the books published fall raw, immature, and abortive from the tree of knowledge, we are happy to look upon the labors of Mr. Smith as a brilliant exception. To great elegance and purity of style are added an extent of knowledge, careful and accurate thinking, and a breadth and depth of reflection seldom met with in the current literature of the day. His book, though taking the shape of a romance, and issuing formally from the minds of a few personages, has the severe unity of a single mind, earnestly and competently dealing with the many weighty and tantalizing problems of history, religion, philosophy, and society. These personages are evidently intended to represent incarnately the terrible moral conflicts which underlie our whole social system, and which occasionally issue in destructive revolutions, showing how ineffectual the greatest material success of a society is to silence the painful cries of its spiritual sufferings.

To each man in this life is given a twofold conflict; the one between himself and all outward agents; the other, between the material and spiritual elements of his own nature. As it is in this respect with man himself, so is it with the society whereof he forms a very subordinate unit. The social system with which we are incorporated re-acts more powerfully on us than we can act upon it, absorbs and modifies us to such an extent, as to render us oftentimes but a literal outgrowth of its operations. Our religious, political, and social opinions are consequently due, in most cases, rather to the mere accident of our birth than to the independent exercise of our reason; and this accident itself is but too often the feeble standard by which society judges us, and by which we rise or fall in its estimation. The great object, therefore, of every writer ought to be to draw us out of a vicious traditional state of mind, to teach us the right use of our faculties, and to place the whole past before us in such a way as to enable our minds to grasp it in its true statical and dynamical relationships. To this end we must view history as it is viewed in the following beautiful extract from the work before us (page 504):

I hold it amongst the weakest of all modes of argument to take us to the ruins of ancient cities, and bid us sit down there and contemplate them in despondency. It is from the history of a world, and not from the history of a nation, that we have to predict the future of a world. Progress belongs to Humanity, not to Rome or Greece. A certain type of social existence is developed; then a higher type is subsequently developed. It matters not whether this is done within the same city, or the same neighborhood or in remote parts of the world. The progress which Humanity has made is equally clear. The ruins of an ancient city may be compared to the fossil remains we exhume from the earth; they are no proof of an expiring vitality, but of a vitality that has been putting on new forms.

* Thorndale, or the Conflict of Opinions. By William Smith, London.

Nature could not grow *that shell* into any higher type; she left it, and grew another. I take the ruins to be a proof of the progressive development of human life. Men had built well, but yet imperfectly; there was something wrong at the foundation something wrong in the plan; they must begin elsewhere on a new plan. That broken shell is left standing there as a record of the past.

It is to be deplored that society in thickly populated countries has no great security for those who are born out of its bosom poor and friendless. They are cast out upon the world to have their feelings lacerated or poisoned; to have their talents wasted, distorted, or turned to evil ends. Let society have the proper care of all its children; let it open to each a suitable avenue for its aptitudes, and we shall see a happier and more tranquil condition of things. Our author views this matter, in the following extract, both as a man of mind and heart:

The connection between prosperity and amenity of manners and social affection is generally perceived and admitted. Want is very savage; hunger and hatred are very nearly allied. All men recognize these truths; and I have only to call attention to them. If men have to struggle for very life, for self-preservation, all their being is absorbed in this one effort. This is nature's law, and a most wise one. Each creature must strive to the utmost for its own preservation. Men whose daily bread is a matter of daily anxiety, will have their thoughts so fixed on this one subject, that it will entirely occupy their field of mental vision. Let them be, according to a common and very significant phrase, "beforehand with the world"—let them earn their subsistence by prospective and systematic labors—the field of vision expands. They are, at all events, in a condition wherein enlarged views of their own interest, and of the interest of the society to which they belong, may be taken. That they will take such views, will mainly depend on a collateral intellectual education, into which I shall enter by and by.

How well is the ship navigated while every sailor moves to his function with sense of security! He navigates the ship for his own safety, as well as the safety of others; but the sense of personal danger is not there to disturb nor to engross him. But let the terror of shipwreck fall upon the crew, and "duty to the good ship" is necessarily gone—is transformed into personal anxiety, each one for his own preservation. Something like this takes place in the navigation of the good ship Society. There must be a freedom from the anxieties of self-preservation, if all are to take their parts in a spirit of duty to the whole.

This book may be called a beautiful expression of the painful antagonism between the barbarously moulded externalities of the world, and a delicately acute mind and sensitive heart. The hero of it is very appropriately represented as the victim of hereditary consumption, a disease well known to fasten upon the finest organizations, and to be attended with the most charming attributes of mind and heart. We do not believe, however, that in order to have high mental and affectional qualities it is necessary to have a diseased or even a delicate body. But as we are now socially constituted, muscular life is brought more into requisition than spiritual life, where the latter is not rendered supreme over the former by some peculiar sympathetic rela-

tionship between it and its physical embodiment. In commercial, professional, and industrial life, sensibility of heart and penetration of mind are seldom the concomitants of worldly success; and as to family and social life, they are rather the inlets through which the spirit is wounded, than the sources of enjoyment. It is not man alone we find worshipping the stern brutality of success, but we even see our women degraded to the idolatry of material success apart from the means by which it may be obtained. We are all more or less submerged in a sea of matter, tormented by grovelling ambitions, selfish desires, and dead to the fine impulses of humanity, and the elevating aspirations of a refined nature. Delicacy of feeling and great purity of thought cut us off from a popular and fashionable fraternization with two-thirds of our species, and render us anomalous rather than natural growths of our day and generation. Life was never more of a crushing struggle than it is at present. The pathway to popular applause or enjoyment was never more rugged, never more thorny, never more insecure. We are all fired with the same desires, all striving with the same intents, all bound on the same journey; though it is well known that the nature of things excludes all but a very limited few from success, while opening out unlimited competition to the many. Where thousands may become exhausted and even degraded by the race, only one can become victorious. Thus we see blind uncertainty leading to equally blind competition, and that the equilibrium of life's enjoyment can never be attained, whilst the senseless groping of personal ambition is out of keeping with the general well-being of the community. We want that repose which can alone come from the general incorporation of all individual interests and aims with those of the public generally—in other words, we want a proper moral adaptation of each part of the social organism to the whole.

Whether the problem of life is put through a scientific analysis, or is romantically reflected in the burning colors of the poet's genius, it is equally difficult of solution, and equally powerful to baffle the human intellect. The past and future of the world's existence are darkly deep in mystery, and its whole machinery, though constantly at work in the present, admits of no rational or satisfactory explanation. The currents of our daily life evolve more mysteries than the combined intellect of the whole world could unravel in thousands of years. If the heart touches the lyre of poesy, it is to sing of its own unaccountable emotions; if the mind plunges into the herculean studies of theology and science, and wastes away its young energies, it is also in order to escape from the shadowy world in which it lives and has its being. If we live the life of the soul, spiritual problems of an insoluble nature are constantly weaving themselves before our mental vision, and ever upheaving all the vital energies of our interior nature, while estranging us from the ordinary ongoing, interests, and enterprises of the world—in other words, and according to the conventional standards, we progress only

when we die. If we live the life of the body, we become inextricably interwoven with and lost in the great material machinery of the world; we take on our harness like a quadruped, and pull with all our animal vigor. In a little while we begin to lose all sense of moral rectitude, all aptitude for moral distinctions, all sense of right and wrong, where our own individual interests are at stake, and gradually we are swallowed up in the desire of acquisition, to such an extent as to substitute might for right, and power for justice. In vain we seek to cover up our actual life and its doings in the rich and popular embroidery of popular religions, popular professions, and popular watchwords. We may be baptized, confirmed, and church membered, but to no purpose. The bottom of our life peers through its smooth-running surface, and all its constituents stand up in open testimony against us. Our wives proclaim it, our children proclaim it, our dependents proclaim it, and the sad end to which all our acquisitions are destined proclaims it. The future, then, points to a condition of things very different from that which the past or the present has presented, to a happy combination of matter and spirit in due subordination to each other, and of a nature to regulate their forces, and direct them to the consolidation of the equal rights and enjoyments of all, and in a way suitable to their varying natures, faculties, and tendencies. The deep cry of dissatisfaction must continue to pierce our ears, until the machinery of this planet and that of the human soul shall beat in harmony. Our social and ecclesiastical hierarchies may smother it as they may—explain it they cannot; its echoes shall be heard from generation to generation; until the gates of time shall close upon it in moral satisfaction.

"Oh! when shall all men's good
Be each man's rule?"

This book of "Thorndale" is beautiful, because the true expression of the finest natures of our age. Its thoughts are likewise up to the spirit of the day, as may be seen by the following extract:

I like to notice how admirably the requisite stability of a moral rule is combined with the capability of movement and progress. The law-making race of man draws a line, and all on this side is right, and on that side is wrong. This line seems to each generation to have been drawn once, and forever, and to be immovable. Nevertheless, it *does* move—slowly, like the shadow on the dial, and moves as the light of knowledge rises higher in the skies.

There is no doubt that our moral and scientific ascension is the ground-work of our true sense of the beautiful, and the straightforwardness of our judgments. This is well expressed by our author in the following extracts:

In truth, the earth grows more beautiful as we grow better and wiser. The sentiment of beauty is no one feeling of the eye or of the mind. It is a gathering of many sensations, many feelings, many thoughts—perhaps taking its point of departure from the exquisite pleasure of color, blended with variety and symmetry of form; for forms, like sounds, appear to have a

species of harmony, appealing at once to the sense, whether we regard the several parts of a single form, or the approximation of several distinct forms.

I am never more convinced of the progress of mankind than when I think of the sentiment developed in us by our intercourse with nature, and mark how it augments and refines with our moral culture, and also (though this is not so generally admitted) with our scientific knowledge. We learn, from age to age, to see the beauty of the world; or, what comes to the same thing, this *beautiful creation of the sentiment of beauty*, is developing itself in us.

Social union with our kindred, and artistic union with outward nature, are necessary to our proper cultivation. It is only when we duly love both that we feel the true spell of existence. The following from our author puts this point finely before us :

How every tender, as well as every grand, sentiment comes reflected back to us from the beautiful objects of nature! Therein lies their very power to enchant us. Nature is full of our own human heart. That rose—has not gentle woman leant over it, and left the reflection of her own blush upon the leaves of the flower? To the lover, I think, the rose is always half virgin and but half rose. To the old man, there is childhood in every bud. No hand so rude but that it gathers with the flower more and other beauty than what the dews of heaven had nourished in it.

In the order of time, as well as that of civilization, war has gradually been supplanted by commerce—the armory has had to yield to the counter, and the tournament to the counting-house. The drum of the recruiting sergeant is drowned by the cries of the auctioneer, and buying and selling are more popular than the battle and victory of Mars. Yet commerce has its moral, as war had its physical carnage; its pathway to victory is equally through the brute force of physical strength, mental craft, and pecuniary power. It has also, like war, an accompanying fruitful brood of miseries, strifes, and sufferings. Like war, too, it has its necessary place in the civilization of the world; but it would be wrong to overlook its evils, or to suppose it to be otherwise than a passing act, as it is now constituted, in the great drama of life's doings. Those who are dazzled and intoxicated by its victories alone, are the fiddling Neros of our time, and see but the rank green grass overshooting the underlying virtues of the modestly good and the unambitiously beautiful. What a sad tableau, as graphic as true, is that given by our author in the following extract of the terrible and blasting results of commercial life :

I hate this gambling commerce (he would exclaim); it spares nothing; it rings a bell, and gathers a crowd of artisans together; then, falling of its object, leaves them, for aught it cares, to famine and mendicancy. It robs right and left, friend or relative; it takes the little fortune of the unmarried sister—all that lay between her and the terrible charity of the world—throws it on the heap, and stakes it all. It stakes everything, and always wife and child.

It is not that all men wish to be gamblers. Most men are timid, fearful of change, solicitous to secure rather than eager to gain, and desirous of nothing better than steady labor and assured reward. But the wish is vain. The man cannot be secure; the system does not permit it. The post he occupied is taken from him; his trade declines; his debtor fails, and he, in turn, becomes a debtor; his health breaks, and the investments in which he had stored up his earnings prove worthless. He sees his children growing up, and knows not how he shall provide for them. I do not wonder that men go mad!

And think what exquisite suffering is occasioned to the wife by the cruel uncertainties of commerce! Women are to be highly cultivated, delicately nurtured, every social affection developed—the maternal feeling almost to a painful excess—and all this refined life and these acute susceptibilities are to be placed at the mercy, we will not say of a gambler, but are to be put in peril, let us say, by the want of skill and foresight, on the part of an honest husband, in the playing of a very difficult game. The husband has become unkind, severe, morose, as the game went against him. Some day the shattered irritable man discloses to his wife that he is on the eve of bankruptcy—discloses it without any other warning than what she had received from daily exhibitions of ungovernable temper, produced by his fatal embarrassments. I myself have known women, educated like daughters of princes, perhaps more refined and cultivated than the daughters of princes are likely to be—women who, as mistresses of their own homes, were ordering and controlling all things with graceful authority—driven from those pleasant homes, with their children, by no possible fault of theirs, to some squalid retreat. There, if not deserted by friends and relatives, their own grief, timidity, and sense of humiliation, shut them up in solitude. I have known those whose smile made every one happy around them, quite lose the power to smile, grow weak, and wan, and querulous.

Very terrible to me is this combination of culture and insecurity—the warm and tender nest built so often on the rotten bough. How many a father, looking at his children, listening to their prattle, which speaks of nothing but hope and security, marking how hitherto they have grown up without toil and without care, half brothers of the lilies of the field, and thinking in his secret heart what terrible reverse may be in store for him and them. How many a father has watched his children at their play, and, notwithstanding all their beauty and all their joy, wished they had not been.

The condition, at any given period, of the Pulpit, the Bar, and the Exchange must, with slight modifications, be that of the society wherein they exist: they are, in short, what society makes them. If at present we discover a certain amount of crookedness, of shortcomings, of moral debility in these leading social instruments, it is owing to the consumptive condition of social existence, to the perversion of drivelling brains and misdirected hearts, to the ebb of vigorous sense, and the flow of wide-spread folly. New social currents must be formed and set in motion, before the pulpit, bar, and exchange shall rise up vigorously and successfully in inaugurating a new and better state of things. By way of concluding our notice of this book, and giving an illustration of our view of the bar, we give the following description of the lawyer's *sanctum*, the great London Temple (from our author's work) :

It was a strange place to go in quest of my poet. Those dark quadrangles where the lawyers congregated, have always seemed to me a species of "intellectual factory," where a peculiar race of ingenious men manufacture, with infinite toil, an artificial system of jurisprudence, whose complications are infinitely effective to the rest of mankind. First, historical tradition, that should long ago have ranked with the curiosities of antiquarian learning; secondly, sound common sense, equitable maxims that rule intelligibly the conduct of all mankind; thirdly, a confused mass of statutes, so verbose no ordinary man can see the meaning of the words; such are the materials these intellectual artisans place together upon their looms. Yet they get devotedly attached to the web they weave. They fall into a kindred error to that of certain dogmatic theologians; they think because the necessity and desire for some law support all their strange devices, that these devices are absolutely indispensable to the support of law.

It was a strange place to seek a poet in, or any one who had learnt to love thinking for the truth itself that was to be acquired by it.

THE T SQUARES.

OUTE GREEN.—THE BUILDING COMMITTEE.

"PRAY what is a Building Committee?" inquired the Steel T Square.

"A Building Committee," said the Linden Square, "is a gentleman, or a number of gentlemen, appointed by a corporation, such as a church, a bank, the city government, the government of a State, etc., to carry out the construction of a corporation edifice."

Steel T Square.—"You say, one or a number. I suppose this depends much upon the magnitude of the building and its importance or costliness."

Linden T Square.—"Not at all, my innocent friend. Permit me to inform you that building committees but rarely consist of one person; this is the case about once in a century. Most generally the number varies from three to eleven. As far as my experience goes, the number of individuals composing a building committee is increased in inverse ratio to the importance and magnitude of the proposed structure. Once in a while the general government, or some rich corporation, appoint one person to attend to their building interests. Large churches, banks, city halls, etc., are frequently placed in the hands of committees of three and five; smaller buildings are most commonly erected by committees of seven, nine, or eleven. There are rumors afloat in the building community that sundry little jobs have been triumphantly carried through by committees of seventeen to twenty-seven."

Steel T Square.—"What you say is truly surprising. But what is most incomprehensible to me is, to know where poor and small corporations get their committees. It is not to be supposed that they can always muster from nine to seventeen individuals who are at once adepts in architecture, practical building, and finance."

Linden T Square.—"Of course not! But building committees are not usually selected for their superior intelligence in relation to building matters; in fact, they rarely know anything about them."

Steel T Square.—"What are the qualifications required for a member of a building committee?"

Linden T Square.—"First: he ought to be, and generally is, a

trustee, director, or some other manager of the corporation he is to act for; and it is not unfrequently the case that the directors or managers, constitute themselves a building committee *in a body*, when they cannot agree among themselves to delegate that power to a select few.—Secondly: he must represent one of the parties or cliques composing the corporation. If it is a political one he must be a democrat, or a whig, or a republican, as the case may require. If it is a financial corporation, he belongs to and generally is, a strong partisan of the make-all-you-can-and-never-pay-if-you-can-help-it party; or he belongs to the conservative members, who believe that 12 per cent. ought to satisfy everybody. If it is a religious corporation, the building committee is expected to be favorable to the doctrines and to like the preaching of the minister; to go strong against believers of other denominations, and to be faithful in the performance of all religious duties.—Thirdly: he must be a rich man, a poor man, or a man middling well off,—that is, the building committee must, if possible, be composed of members belonging to those three different classes, so that they may be fairly represented.—Fourthly: he must be a 'cute' man—a man who cannot be taken the advantage of very readily in case of a mental controversy in dollars and cents."

Steel T Square.—"Is it not essential for building committees to be at least amateurs in architecture?"

Linden T Square.—"Architecture, my dear fellow, is the last thing people think of when they begin to build. A practical builder, provided he has retired from business, is a rare morsel, and one greatly sought after for building committees—but as rarely found. Nobody thinks anything about architecture excepting as to the fact that, an architect must always be employed. A business man, therefore, who has built a house or a store, or who is likely to build one, is looked upon as the next desirable person on a building committee, provided his other qualifications are all right. But it is never very earnestly inquired into whether or not he has built successfully, for we are a practical people, and do not philosophize much upon abstract ideas. What is wanted is a smart man—one that is sure to manage the whole concern; as to whether he knows anything about architecture or not, that is not the question. Philologus Brown or somebody else will do all that kind of fancy work. The question is simply can the candidate for a building committee manage an architect,—and for that I should like to see the architect who can face Mr. Green. I really believe he could make the American Institute of Architects believe that battlements are the best ornaments for churches."

Steel T Square.—"Ah, I begin to understand now; but still I do not see why it is that the number of the committee are increased in an inverse ratio to the importance of the work."

Linden T Square.—"The fact is, that one or three men are much better calculated to conduct a building, a battle, or a mercantile undertaking than a dozen or a hundred; but the knowledge of this fact presupposes a certain degree of information and experience—a sort of experience more often possessed by those largely engaged in great undertakings than by men operating on a small scale. The consequence is, that poor and weak corporations appoint the largest building committees."

Steel T Square.—"And how is it possible for them to perform the task imposed upon them?"

Linden T Square.—"In most cases it is not performed at all. They just do the worst that can be done under the circumstances. It frequently happens that there is one man amongst them im-